

## IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (presently amended) A method comprising the steps of:  
entering via a ~~web-based~~ portal user requirements data, wherein the user requirements data include information indicative ~~determinative~~ of a configuration of a telecommunications system for providing voice and data communications to a plurality of users;  
translating the user requirements data into configuration data, wherein the configuration data is stored in a storage location ~~coupled to~~ in electronic communication with the portal;  
providing the configuration data to a manufacturing agent;  
manufacturing the communications system, wherein the step of manufacturing the communications system includes ~~the step of~~ loading the configuration data into the communications system, wherein the communications system operates based on the configuration data; and  
providing the communications system to a customer, wherein the communications system is operative to provide voice and data communications to the plurality of users in accordance with the configuration data.
2. (new) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of testing the user requirements data prior to the step of translating the user requirements data, wherein in response to the testing corrected or additional user requirements data are selectively prompted for entry via the portal.
3. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the portal comprises a web-based portal.
4. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the portal comprises an application running on a computing system remote from a central computing resource electronically coupled to the storage location.
5. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the user requirements data are entered via the portal via a plurality of graphical displays that prompt the entry of the user requirements data.
6. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the user requirements data include information indicative of WAN services.

7. (new) The method of claim 6, wherein an estimated number and type of WAN services are predicted based on the user requirements data.

8. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of translating the user requirements data into configuration data comprises processing the user requirements data with automatic or semiautomatic software tools.

9. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the configuration data resulting from the translation of the user requirements data are tested prior to the step of providing the configuration data to a manufacturing agent, wherein in response to the testing corrected or additional user requirements data are selectively prompted for entry via the portal.

10. (new) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of electronically placing an order for the manufacture of the communications system, wherein the order comprising a legally binding commercial transaction for the communications system.

11. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the configuration data are electronically transmitted from the storage location to the manufacturing agent.

12. (new) The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of producing a physical medium including the configuration data.

13. (new) The method of claim 12, wherein the physical medium is provided with the communications system to the customer.

14. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the user requirements data includes information indicative of call routing.

15. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the storage location stores configuration data for a plurality of communications systems.

16. (new) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of updating the user requirements data via the portal, wherein the communications system is updated or reconfigured.

17. (new) The method of claim 16, wherein updated configuration data are generated based on the updated user requirements data.

18. (new) The method of claim 17, wherein the updated configuration data are electronically transmitted to the communications system.

19. (new) The method of claim 18, wherein the updated configuration data are applied to the communications system, wherein the communications system operates responsive to the updated configuration data.